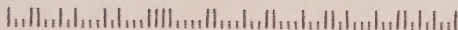




The Caring Tree Project
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The Caring Tree[®]

February, 1995

a Celebration of Caring

Success of 1994 Season Points to Future

*Dear Caring Tree Participants,
Past and Future....*

Now that the 1994 Caring Tree Season is behind us, I would like share with you some stories from this past season, and some plans for the future.

But first, a big "Thank you" goes out to all the 1994 Project participants for all the hard work and creativity that went into making the 1994 Caring Tree season a success.

Our Caring Tree growers, too, are owed many thanks for overcoming difficult situations to insure a successful year.

As heavy rains swept through the North Carolina mountains in early December, farm roads turned into rivers of mud. Tree harvesting became next to impossible for Caring Tree growers.

I found myself, more than once, helping load trees in freezing rains on slippery mountain slopes in order to meet our crucial shipping deadlines.

Then in the warmer (and dryer) packing barns we boxed and loaded the freshly cut trees, bursting with fragrance. Tying each with a red ribbon reminded us why we were there.

At times we were covered from head to toe with sticky sap which we removed from our hair and hands with turpentine at the end of each day. Our clothes were a total loss.

The significance of our efforts was realized when we pushed closed the doors of tightly packed UPS tractor trailers, sending fragrant trees and wreaths to Caring Tree homes across the country.

If this sounds like fun to you, volunteers are welcome next year!

Twenty community-based AIDS service agencies participated in the 1994 project, double the enrollment of our first year. And, nearly \$20,000 was

raised for AIDS Services to remain in local communities to provide care and services to people with AIDS.

Although these figures fell short of our hopes for the '94 season, the growth of this past year's project and the enthusiasm of participants, new and returning, points to a bright and growing future for the Caring Tree Project.

Plans for the 1995 project have already begun. And feedback from past participants is helping to shape a newly revised program guidebook, and new policies for the Caring Tree.

One of the most exciting changes to benefit participating organizations will be a revision of the enrollment fee policy.

The 1995 enrollment fee will remain \$200, but the enrollment fee will be fully refunded at the close of the season to any organization obtaining 100 orders.

This change makes the Caring Tree project a no-cost opportunity to any organization willing to participate.

Also, increased emphasis will be given to helping Caring Tree participants reach corporate and private gift-giving opportunities.

Numerous orders were received from companies and individuals sending Caring Tree Wreaths as gifts, while supporting their local AIDS services. The largest of these was an order for 20 wreaths from a single donor, but there were many for 8-10 items from a single individual or business.

Orders like these capture a planned expenditure for many businesses and individuals and can provide funds that stay in the local community with Caring Tree agencies.

I hope all of you will be in touch soon to start planning for a successful 1995 season.

I wish you a 1995 filled with Caring!

Don

Don Daley
Caring Tree Project Director

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Caring Tree Project Brings A Cooperative Effort To AIDS Fundraising.

Any AIDS service agency can participate in the Caring Tree Project. And by doing so, each organization joins others across the nation in carrying a common message to the public; a message "to care"

Caring Trees and wreaths are shipped directly to donors' homes during the holidays and are decked with a red ribbon for AIDS awareness. Hopefully, the red ribbon will remind people throughout the holiday of the work being done in their community to help people with AIDS.

The message of the Caring Tree is as important as the fundraising opportunity.

"We're sending a message into peoples homes, and hopefully, they will start talking about AIDS; in their homes, with their families, with their children, with their friend. And maybe, some attitudes will change," said Don Daley, Caring Tree Project Director.

The Caring Tree Project is a fundraising opportunity that agencies can easily use to reach people that might not have supported their organization in the past.

"I like that we're asking people for money they planned to spend already," said Kim Depenbrock who coordinated the Caring Tree Project for North Central Florida AIDS Network. "If they're going to buy a tree anyway, they can buy it from us and feel good about it, and it doesn't interfere with our regular donations."

According to the National Christmas Tree Association, 95% of all American households put up a tree in their homes during the holidays. Approximately 1/2 of all trees are real, pointing out a real opportunity for AIDS service agencies.

"We want to give every American the chance, even if just once a year, to say 'It's time to write my check and show I care,' and then to send that check to their local agencies to fund services, care, and education in their own community," Daley said.

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Don Daley - *Project Director*
Paul Fortenberry - *Newsletter*
Kim Koschmeder - *Public Relations Volunteer*
Charles Kalal - *Foundation Committee Chair*

"What we're trying to do is give AIDS service organizations a common voice for one month each year; a voice that can reach a wide audience."

With the Caring Tree Project each agency conducts its own fundraiser to benefit its own organization. The Caring Tree Project's common theme helps all.

During the 1993 project in Florida wide spread publicity helped the effort when Florida's governor, Lawton Chiles, bought a Caring Tree for the governor's mansion.

"The papers really respond well when they see our effort as area-wide, state-wide, or involving the entire community," said Depenbrock. "The broad participation helped us get more publicity."

So, with great hopes for the 1995 season, the Caring Tree project is once again asking people to "Celebrate Caring."

If your organization would like to know more, call the Caring Tree Project today at 800-700-3305.

Notes From Past Projects *what worked...* *what didn't...*

- ♦ Agencies that mailed separate Caring Tree announcements did no better than those that piggybacked the Caring Tree info onto their newsletter or other mailings or distributed materials at another event.
- ♦ Agencies that sold Caring Trees for less than the recommended donation received fewer orders than those who asked full price.
- ♦ Agencies that actively solicited gift orders received far more orders than those agencies that omitted gift order spaces from their order forms.
- ♦ Gift orders accounted for nearly 1/3 of all Caring Tree items ordered.
- ♦ Agencies that planned and started early obtained far more orders than late starters.

Caring Tree Takes The Risk Out of Fundraising

... Enrollment fees are now fully refundable!

The Caring Tree Project is a fun and low-cost fundraising effort for any community-based AIDS Service Organization.

"We are not a tree lot fundraiser," emphasized Project Director Don Daley.

With the Caring Tree Project, participating organizations' only responsibility is to take orders and submit them to the project by the deadline dates.

Trees and wreaths are shipped directly to each donor's door on their choice of shipping dates throughout the holiday season.

The advantages of the Caring Tree project are many over traditional tree lot sales.

Caring Tree agencies do not encounter the financial risk that comes with operating a tree lot. There are no per-tree, advance deposits to pay, and no investment in huge inventories which might not sell by the end of the season.

Also, the program is easy to understand and volunteers are not asked to commit a lot of time standing in the cold on dark street corners. The emphasis rather, is on telling people in your community about your organization and the services you provide, and then asking for their support.

The Caring Tree enrollment fee remains \$200 and helps cover the cost of promoting and running the project. But this year, the enrollment fee will be refunded to any organization that obtains 100 orders.

"We want the enrollment fee to be an incentive for each agency to

get organized and raise more for their organization. We want to encourage each agency to set a realistic goals, and then reach it," said Daley.

The project is also one that agencies can start with and watch grow, says Scott Dickerson of Schalico Center in Anderson Ind.

"We didn't expect to make money the first year, but we did. And, I think word-of-mouth will really help next years project. Lots of people have commented on the quality when they saw a friends tree. Usually they said 'I didn't think they would be that nice,'" said Dickerson, who sees next years sales growing from referrals, many which may be new supporters.

National AIDS Fundraising Conference Planned, May 4-6

The second annual National AIDS Fundraising Conference will be held May 4, 5 and 6, in Philadelphia.

The four major workshop tracks for this year's conference will be Fundamentals, Annual Giving, Major Gifts, and New Directions. Eight additional workshops are planned for attendees to chose from.

Registration fee is \$295 if received before April 1, 1995, and covers the cost of all sessions.

For more information call 215-981-3302

Joining The 1995 Caring Tree Project Is Easy

Any community based AIDS service organization can join the 1995 Caring Tree Project by requesting a copy of the Caring Tree Proposal and enrollment form.

The completed enrollment form should be submitted to the Caring Tree office along with the \$200 enrollment fee no later than May 31, 1995.

The \$200 enrollment fee is fully refunded at the close of the season to any agency submitting orders for at least 100 items.

Requests for enrollment after the May 31 deadline will be processed with a \$25 late processing fee.

After the enrollment form and fee is processed, you will receive a

copy of the Caring Tree Project Guidebook, a step-by-step guide to lead you through a successful campaign.

The Project Guidebook includes workbooks for developing opportunities in your community such as Corporate Gift giving, Building community alliances, commercial sponsorships, and organizing your volunteers.

The guidebook includes complete camera ready artwork for brochures, order forms, and posters

Also included is a copy of the Caring Tree publication *Basic Principles of Public Relations For Aids Service Organizations*.

For more information, call the Caring Tree office today.

The Caring Tree Project is:

Fundraising...

Constituency Building...

Education...

a Celebration of Caring ... for all people!